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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2033
TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [KS](#) [KN](#) [PK](#) [JA](#) [MARR](#)
SUBJECT: (U) Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister?s
September 29 meetings with the Deputy Secretary, U/S
Burns

11. (U) Classified by EAP Acting Assistant Secretary Glyn
Davies, Department of State. Reason 1.4 (b), (d), (h).

12. (C) SUMMARY: Prime Minister Aso?s foreign policies
will remain consistent with those of Fukuda and Abe,
assured Deputy Foreign Minister Kenichiro Sasae during
back-to-back meetings with Deputy Secretary Negroponte
and U/S Burns on September 29. Sasae emphasized the
importance of the U.S.-Japan Realignment Roadmap but
raised GOJ concerns related to the funding of Guam
relocation. Sasae noted that recent backpedaling by
Pyongyang was of concern and suggested close
cooperation, including on possible post-Kim Jong-il
contingencies. Sasae explained the political challenges
to an enhanced support package for Afghanistan but
promised best efforts to extend Japan?s OEF refueling
mission. He noted that the GOJ was interested in
expanding assistance to Pakistan. In a separate meeting
with U/S Burns, Sasae agreed to return to Washington for
a U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral dialogue on October 14. END
SUMMARY.

13. (U) D Meeting Participants:

United States
The Deputy Secretary
DAS Alexander Arvizu, EAP
Daniel Russel, EAP/J Director (Notetaker)
Kaye Lee, D Special Assistant

Japan
Kenichiro Sasae, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs
Kanji Yamanouchi, Director for North American Affairs
Kenji Shinoda, DCM Embassy of Japan
Takeomi Yamamoto (Notetaker)

DOMESTIC POLITICS

14. (C) ASO GOVERNMENT: DFM Sasae stressed that PM Aso?s
policies would reflect continuity with the preceding
Fukuda and Abe governments on foreign policy basics.
Sasae commented that Aso as Foreign Minister had
championed the so-called ?Arc of Freedom and Prosperity?
policy, which had been seen by some as aimed at China.
However, now that Sino-Japanese relations were improved,
Aso?s policy emphasis would shift. Sasae noted that the
?Arc? concept was conspicuously absent from Aso?s recent
UN and parliamentary speeches. Sasae also described
himself as ?surprised and impressed? by new FM Nakasone,
proving to be a quick learner.

ALLIANCE TRANSFORMAION ISSUES -- GUAM

15. (C) DFM Sasae made an enigmatic allusion to needing State Department help in "pushing the Defense Department to be more cooperative" on realignment. He clarified that he felt DoD was not sufficiently supportive on budgetary issues relating to the Guam Relocation. At the Deputy Secretary's request, EAP/J Director briefly explained the problems with the GOJ's proposal on tax exemption and incremental funding. In response to Sasae's admission that he didn't know the details, the Deputy Secretary observed that details are usually crucial to finding a solution "but promised to look into the matter."

REGIONAL ISSUES

16. (C) DPRK: Speaking as a former negotiator in the Six Party Talks, Sasae said he was worried about recent North Korean behavior. While the outcome of A/S Hill's visit to Pyongyang would provide some indicators of their intentions, it appeared they were pushing the limits of what the United States would agree to. Continued backpedaling on the agreement to verification would affect the ability of the United States and others to extend energy assistance. The Deputy Secretary observed that North Korea is taking steps to reverse dismantlement. Since those steps themselves are reversible, we should wait to see what A/S Hill is able to achieve. When asked about the significance of Kim Jong-il's health problems, Sasae replied that the DPRK would continue along the lines established by Kim Jong-il even if he himself were incapacitated and that the senior leadership could be expected to "hold things together."

17. (S) Sasae told the Deputy Secretary that the GOJ would welcome good news from A/S Hill's trip. Despite conflicting domestic opinions, the GOJ has "moved past the problem of delisting" in return for a verification protocol. That said, Japan needs continued U.S. backing on the abduction issue. The North Koreans are using impending Japanese elections as an excuse for freezing bilateral talks, but are actually waiting for movement in the Six Party Talks. Pyongyang knows that there cannot be progress on normalization with Japan without a credible deal on the nuclear issue and missiles. Sasae also suggested that the U.S. and Japan should discuss North Korean "future contingencies" and "think ahead to hypothetical scenarios." We should have some bilateral understandings through talks, initially between our respective regional bureaus, about scenarios concerning how the Chinese may behave, what happens to DPRK nuclear weapons, handling North Korean refugees, etc. Sasae suggested we should hold discreet consultations before bringing the ROK into talks. It would also be good to discuss with the Chinese, although Beijing is hesitant to be seen discussing North Korean contingencies. The Deputy Secretary made no commitment on this issue.

18. (S) AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: Sasae briefed the Deputy Secretary on the Aso government's best efforts to extend the maritime refueling operation, but said it faced serious political obstacles and was not popular with the Japanese public. He mentioned the GOJ's humanitarian support for Afghanistan. Turning to Pakistan, Sasae noted approvingly that President Zardari was deploying the Pakistani army to fight in the border region. The problem, he said, was that Zardari will need to implement stringent economic programs that will be extremely unpopular and risk anti-GOP and anti-U.S. backlash. Japan is backing the GOP economically, Sasae said, and recently identified four million dollars to

contribute for programs in the Tribal Areas. Sasae proposed bilateral talks on how to support Pakistan. The Deputy Secretary indicated that A/S Boucher might be the appropriate interlocutor.

MEETING WITH U/S BURNS

¶9. (C) Prior to his meeting with the Deputy Secretary, Sasae compared notes on a range of issues including Russia-Georgia, Iran sanctions, Burma, and the G-8 presidency with Under Secretary William Burns. As in his meeting with the Deputy Secretary, Sasae emphasized the importance of alliance transformation, but said the GOJ was concerned about budgetary issues affecting the relocation. U/S Burns raised Afghanistan, and strongly urged that Japan move forward with a significant package of additional assistance. Sasae said the GOJ faced an ?enormous political battle? to secure assistance, noting that Japan?s leadership was distracted by the expected upcoming general election. He said the GOJ understood the significance of the issue, but cautioned that progress would be slow.

¶10. (C) Burns and Sasae agreed to hold a U.S.-Japan-ROK Trilateral Dialogue on Oct. 14, 2008 in Washington. Sasae said he saw the meeting as an opportunity to have an informal discussion on a range of global issues.
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